

tax collections would be reduced by 6.2 percent—much less than the Kennedy and much less than the Reagan administrations. In fact, according to the National Taxpayers' Union, as part of our gross domestic product, when you compare the Kennedy tax cut, it was 2 percent of the gross domestic product—the Bush proposal of taxes being reduced by \$1.6 trillion is a mere 1.2 percent of the gross domestic product.

You might recall the great growth in our economy in the 1960s was occasioned by the tax cuts of the Kennedy administration. So this is merely one-half of the revenue impact of the Kennedy tax cut.

I say to my colleagues in the Senate, if we cannot cut taxes in the times of these surpluses, when will we be able to give tax relief and reduce the tax burden on the people of America?

This is the time to make the Federal Tax Code more fair and less burdensome. This is the time to get rid of this illogical marriage penalty tax which imposes a penalty on men and women just because they are married. This is the time to eliminate the death tax which is a very unfair tax, especially on family farms and small businesses. This is the time to make sure that individuals and small business owners get 100-percent tax deductibility for health insurance. And there are many other things we can do. This is the time to act for the people of America.

I hope my Senate colleagues will seize this opportunity to exercise fiscal discipline and restraint and realize that the owners of this country deserves tax relief, and they deserve it now.

I thank the Chair. I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. AL-LARD). The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. LOTT. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, I want to acknowledge the very fine statement made by the junior Senator from Virginia, certainly a very experienced leader, having served in the House of Representatives and having been Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and already a very active participant in what is happening in the Senate and in our Government.

I had a feeling he would probably be suggesting tax relief is a good idea. Virginia has a strong opinion on that going back just a few years. I thank him very much for his statement.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

Under the previous order, the majority leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO LORETTA F. SYMMS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the outstanding ac-

complishments of Loretta Fuller Symms. There she is, looking quite natural in the front of this Chamber. This week, she will be retiring after over 20 years of congressional service. Has it been that long? For 14 of those years, she has served in the Senate.

I first met Loretta 20 years ago when I was a Member of the House of Representatives and she was working in the office of then-Congressman Steve Symms of Idaho. She would tell you—Steve and I were first elected in 1972 and came 1973—Steve and I have a common bond philosophically but also fraternally in that we were close friends, and that is where I first met Loretta.

She moved to the Washington area from Coeur d'Alene, ID, a beautiful area. What a sacrifice to move from Coeur d'Alene, ID, to come to Washington. Thank goodness she did, and we have all been much better off because of her outstanding congressional career.

In 1987, the very wise Senator Bob Dole, my predecessor as Republican leader, chose Loretta to be the Republican representative in the Sergeant at Arms Office. Over the next 9 years, she filled a number of roles within that organization. It was during that time that I was first elected to the Senate, and Loretta was very helpful to me and my staff in opening my offices here in Washington and in Mississippi.

I remember she had a post, more or less, in the back of the Chamber, and I quite often would stop by to ask her what in the world was happening because the rules here are quite different from what I had been used to in the House. Of course, I was concerned about a number of things that I found difficult to manage and to deal with over here, but she was very helpful.

She has always brought professional business practices to the Senate operations. As director of Capitol facilities, she restructured the department establishing career ladders, formalizing job descriptions, instituting reading programs, and starting computer classes and other training programs for our employees.

Working with the Secretary of the Senate, she contributed to the management and oversight of the Senate page program, serving as adviser, mentor, and sometime surrogate parent to the high school students who participate in the program.

She was a driving force in the opening of Webster Hall, the building that functions both as a dormitory and as a site for the Senate page school.

I was pleased to appoint Loretta as Deputy Sergeant at Arms in 1996, the post she will serve until Friday. In that role, she has done a magnificent job. In fact, I was not sure I could give these remarks this morning because I still would like to ask her to change her mind: don't do this; at least stay until we complete the new extension on the

east front of the Capitol. It wouldn't be but another 2 or 3 years perhaps. Steve would understand. I have made that plea to no avail. I guess, come Friday, she will be moving on to a different and exciting life, I am sure.

She has demonstrated an unmatched dedication to the institution of the Senate and its traditions. She understands them. She helps them and protects them. She contributed in large part to the restoration of the Senate Chamber in its current majesty, an area I have felt strongly about, but she made sure we paid attention to history and that it was done with good taste. The Chamber looks better today than it did 5 years ago.

Loretta has ably handled the huge and demanding responsibility of overseeing the daily operations of the Sergeant at Arms organization and its 750 employees. I know our Sergeant at Arms, Jim Ziglar, has been worried about this Friday and this day and how she would ever be replaced. A good choice has been made as a successor, but still I do not think we could ever truly replace Loretta and the job she has done.

In her duties as a representative of the Senate, Loretta has assisted Presidents, Vice Presidents, and foreign heads of state as they made official visits here. She has led the Senate as we walked through the Capitol Building over to the House side for joint sessions. I always thought we got more than our due share of notice, probably because Loretta was leading the pack.

We will surely notice her absence next week and for a long time to come, but I know Loretta is happy to exchange foreign dignitaries' visits for more visits with her 10 grandchildren. It is hard to believe she has 10, and here I am working only on my second one.

We are sad when one of our Senate family leaves us, but at the same time, we could not be happier for her. I know her husband, Steve Symms, is going to be happier, too.

As Loretta moves on to new challenges, I say thank you on the Senate's behalf and on my own behalf. The words are inadequate to express our appreciation for the kind of person you are and the job you have done. We all wish you the very best in your next career as grandmother and as keeper of Steve Symms, which will be a challenge. We all appreciate you.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PIPELINE SAFETY IMPROVEMENT
ACT OF 2001

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to the consideration of S. 235, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 235) to provide for enhanced safety, public awareness, and environmental protection in pipeline transportation, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona is recognized.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I am pleased the Senate is now considering S. 235, the Pipeline Safety Improvement Act of 2001. I am joined in sponsoring this important transportation safety legislation by Senators MURRAY, HOLLINGS, HUTCHISON, BINGAMAN, DOMENICI, BREAUX, BROWNBACK, SMITH, and LANDRIEU. I especially express my appreciation to Senator MURRAY, as well as former Senator Gorton, for the hundreds of hours they put into this legislation.

This bill is the product of many months of hearings and bipartisan compromise and cooperation during the last Congress. It is designed to promote both public and environmental safety by reauthorizing and strengthening our Federal pipeline safety programs which expired last September.

As most of my colleagues well know, the Senate worked long and hard during the last Congress on how best to improve pipeline safety. After several months of hearings, and countless meetings, the Senate finally achieved a bipartisan consensus on comprehensive pipeline safety improvement legislation. We unanimously approved that legislation last September 7. I want to point out, by a voice vote, this legislation was passed just last September 7. Unfortunately, the House failed to approve a pipeline safety measure so we were never able to get to conference or send a measure to the President. Our collective inaction was a black mark on the 106th Congress.

Because the Congress as a whole did not act, the unacceptable status quo under which a total of 38 fatalities occurred during just the last year remains the law of the land. If we consider the pipeline-related deaths during the last Congress, that number increases to 64 total fatalities. Again, there have been 64 recent deaths, yet we have done nothing concrete to improve the law governing pipeline safety. Timely action not only by the Senate, but also the House, is needed to address identified safety problems before any more lives are lost. This is a call for action by both Chambers.

I commend and thank the Senate leadership on both sides for recognizing the critical need for passage of this legislation and scheduling this floor action so quickly. This early attention by the Senate demonstrates our firm commitment to improving pipeline

safety. I remain hopeful that the new Congress as a whole will act quickly to take the necessary action to improve pipeline safety before we receive another call to action by yet another tragic accident.

Before I discuss the specific provisions of the legislation, I would like to discuss the safety record for pipeline transportation. According to the Department of Transportation, pipeline related incidents dropped nearly 80 percent between 1975 and 1998, and the loss of product due to accident ruptures has been cut in half. From 1989 through 1998, pipeline accidents resulted in about 22 fatalities per year—far fewer than the number of fatal accidents experienced among other modes. While the fatality rate has been generally low, it has taken a turn in the wrong direction during the past 2 years—with 26 fatalities in 1999 and 38 fatalities in the year 2000. I must also point out that according to the General Accounting Office, the total number of major pipeline accidents—those resulting in a fatality, and injury or property damage of \$50,000 or more—increased by about 4 percent annually between 1989 and 1998.

The leading cause of pipeline failures is outside force damage, usually from excavation by third parties. Other causes of failures include corrosion, incorrect operation, construction, material defect, equipment malfunction, and pipe failure.

While statistically the safety record is generally good, accidents do occur, and when they occur, they can be devastating. That was certainly the case last August when a pipeline accident claimed the lives of 12 members of two families camping near Carlsbad, NM, and the previous year when three young men lost their lives in Bellingham, WA. That is why I believe so strongly that we must act now to help prevent future pipeline-related tragedies. It is our duty to take action as necessary to ensure our Federal transportation safety policies are sound and effective, whether for air, rail, truck, or pipelines.

The Office of Pipeline Safety within the Department of Transportation's Research and Special Programs Administration oversees the transportation of about 65 percent of the petroleum and most of the natural gas transported in the United States. OPS regulates the day-to-day safety of 3,000 gas pipeline operators with more than 1.6 million miles of pipelines. It also regulates more than 200 hazardous liquid operators with 155,000 miles of pipelines. Given the immense array of pipelines that traverse our nation, reauthorization of the pipeline safety program is, quite simply, critical to public safety.

The legislation before us today will strengthen and improve pipeline safety. S. 235 will authorize additional funding for safety enforcement and research and development efforts. It will

provide for increased State oversight authority and facilitate greater public information sharing at the local community level. It raises civil penalties, provides whistle-blower protections for employees, and provides for many other safety improvements. In short, it will promote both public and environmental safety.

Let me describe the major provisions of the bill:

First, the bill would require the implementation of pipeline safety recommendations issued last March by the Department of Transportation's Inspector General to the Research and Special Programs Administration. The IG found several glaring safety gaps at OPS and it is incumbent upon us all to do all we can to insure that the Department affirmatively acts on these critical problems.

The legislation would also require the Secretary of Transportation, the RSPA Administrator and the Director of the Office of Pipeline Safety to respond to all NTSB pipeline safety recommendations within 90 days of receipt. The Department's responsiveness to NTSB pipeline safety recommendations for years has been poor at best. While current law requires the Secretary to respond to the NTSB no later than 90 days after receiving a safety recommendation, there are no similar requirements at RSPA. I am aware of one case in particular where an NTSB recommendation sat at DOT's pipeline office for more than 900 days before even an acknowledgment of the recommendation was issued. Such disregard for the important work of the NTSB is intolerable. Therefore, this legislation statutorily requires RSPA and OPS to respond to each and every pipeline safety recommendation it receives from the NTSB and to provide a detailed report on what action it plans to initiate to implement the recommendation.

The measure would require pipeline operators to submit to the Secretary of Transportation a plan designed to improve the qualifications for pipeline personnel. At a minimum, the qualification plan would have to demonstrate that pipeline employees have the necessary knowledge to safely and properly perform their assigned duties and would require testing and periodic reexamination of the employees' qualifications.

The legislation would require DOT to issue regulations mandating pipeline operators to periodically determine the adequacy of their pipelines to safely operate and to implement integrity management programs to reduce those identified risks. The regulations would, at a minimum, require operators to do the following: base their integrity management plans on risk assessments that they conduct; periodically assess the integrity of their pipelines; and, take steps to prevent and mitigate unintended releases, such as improving